

TIME REQUIRED FOR THIS ACTIVITY

30-60 Minutes

GOALS OF THE ACTIVITY:

To identify and address the issues surrounding service to self-represented litigants.

PREPARATION:

Make enough copies of Participant Packet, page 19 (*Strategy Worksheet*) for each participant.

INTRODUCTION: *(tailor as needed)*

FACILITATOR:

“Courts throughout the nation are faced with an increasing number of litigants who choose to represent themselves. These self-represented litigants often lack knowledge regarding the judicial system and look to their first point of contact - court clerks - to guide them in the right direction.

This need for guidance presents court clerks with some difficult challenges.

During our time together today, we are going to identify the challenges that self-represented litigants present for our court. We are also going to brainstorm ways we might address or even resolve these challenges.”

ACTIVITY:

1. Take 5 minutes and have each participant fill in the first column of the worksheet.
2. Ask for a volunteer to share ONE of the challenges they wrote down. Write the given challenge on a blackboard, overhead, or flipchart.
3. Then ask participants to brainstorm ways to resolve the issue (*all ideas welcome*). Write down all ideas.
4. Ask participants to choose what they feel is the “best” idea for resolving the issue.
You could do this several different ways:
 - by a show of hands,
 - giving each participant “sticky dots” and have them put their dots on the flip chart beside the “best” idea,
 - numbering the suggestions and having people put the number of the best idea on a piece of paper and dropping it into a hat.
5. After voting on the best idea, identify the steps that would be necessary to possibly implement the new idea.
6. Repeat the above process as time allows.

CONCLUSION:

FACILITATOR:

“Thanks for all of the ideas you have shared today. As first-point-of contact for court customers, your experience in dealing with the needs of court customers is helpful. I will take these suggestions to (supervisor) for consideration for improving the court’s service to self-represented litigants.

If these suggestions are approved, which of you would be interested in helping us create the resources we have suggested?

Again, thanks for your ideas. Have a great day!”

Serving The Self-Represented Litigant

GUIDING THE SELF-REPRESENTED



